

Sunday Sermon Themes and Scriptures

Date: December 3, 2023 Sermon Series Title: Why God became human Sermon Title: To demonstrate God's heart so we can know that God is a good, loving & just God Old Testament: Jeremiah 23:5 New Testament: John 1:1-7, 14	Date: December 10, 2023 Sermon Series Title: Why God became human Sermon Title: . To show us the way and provide us the perfect example to follow. Old Testament: Isaiah 9:2 & 6 New Testament: Philippians 2:1-11
Date: December 17, 2023 Sermon Series Title: Why God became human Sermon Title: To identify with us – God knows what it's like to be a human. Old Testament: Isaiah 7:14 New Testament: Matthew 13:13-17	Date: December 24, 2023 Sermon Series Title: Why God became human Sermon Title: To experience and defeat death on our behalf. Old Testament: Micah 5:2 New Testament: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 & 12-14 & 20-23
Date: December 31, 2023 Sermon Series Title: Work the gift God has given you. Sermon Title: What can I do in 2024 that I did not do in 2023 to work out my own salvation? Old Testament: Deuteronomy 6:4-6 New Testament: Philippians 2:12-13	<u>Sunday Service Information</u> Come join us for services each Sunday at 10:00 am.

Church Contacts

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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Friday – Office Closed.

Newsletter and Bulletin Deadlines

We have a lot of ministries and events going on at Burton and it is important to get the word out regarding them. So, please remember the *deadline for getting information into the weekly bulletin is on Wednesdays. The deadline for monthly Beacon articles is the twentieth of each month.* Please send all information that you want placed in the bulletin or in the Beacon to the office at bae_bmumc@att.net.

DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE!

December Birthdays:

December Anniversaries:

	<u>DAY</u>		<u>DAY</u>		<u>DAY</u>
Annabelle Bricker	4	Sharon Braunberns	23	Bud & Gail Preston	17
Kay Comer	4	Betty Anne Gear	24	Gene & Virginia Spear	19
				Carol & Alan Ackenhausen	23



The Beacon

a monthly newsletter publication of Burton Memorial UMC
December 2023

Brothers and Sisters,

May God's grace give us the necessary joy, peace, and patience to love our neighbors.

As a local congregation, God calls us to be great!! We become great by fulfilling the great commission, obeying the great commandment, and living up to the great expectation. The great commission is to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19). The great commandment is to love the Lord God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-38) and the great expectation is to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8)



To be great, we must embody all four ways to be the church. The four ways to be the church are: 1) hospital for sinners, 2) loving family, 3) non-violent army, and 4) worshipping community.

Welcome to part two of the four-part series, "The Four Ways to be the Church." Last month, we looked at the church as a hospital for sinners. This month, we look at the church as a loving family, then, in January, we will look at the church as a non-violent army. We will end the series in February by looking at the church as a worshipping community.

There is an interesting story about Jesus and his family. It goes like this:

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:46-50)

When I first heard this story, I thought, "What is up with this? This is no way to treat your family, especially your mom!" But, upon further reflection, I realized Jesus was not being rude to his family but was creating a new family grounded in faith rather than blood. When we trust Jesus as Savior & Lord, we automatically become members of this new family. We can truly call each other brother and sister.

Jesus reiterated this reality while dying on the cross. He slowly lifted his bloody head and looked at the Apostle John and Mary, his mother. To Mary he said, "Woman, here is your son," and to John he said, "Here is your mother." (John 19:25-27) Jesus had other brothers who could take care of Mary. So, his primary concern was not his mother's welfare. His primary concern was the establishment of a family held together by faith rather than blood. So, the local congregation is meant to be a loving family.

A congregation must be a loving family because, in this broken world, we all have unfulfilled emotional and relational needs. As a loving family, a congregation can fulfill those needs. This is why fellowship is important in the life of a congregation.

Family members often fight each other. This is true in both blood and church families. Our sinful nature gains the upper hand, and we find ourselves treating our parents, siblings, and other family members worse than we would a stranger. As a pastor, I have seen plenty of ugly family conflicts over money, inheritance, and various jealousies. A friend of mine recently passed away alone in a sterile hospital because his blood family disintegrated, and he left his church family.

The Lord, however, calls us to bring mercy and grace to both our blood and church families. When you fight with a sibling, whether a blood or Christian sibling, pray for God to bless that person. No matter how angry you are, pray for that person! By doing so, you will unleash the power of God's grace to bring reconciliation and loving unity. With this loving unity, the church family can go forth to fulfill the great commission, obey the great commandment, and live up to the great expectation.

For us to be an uncommon church for common people, offering a love of neighbor without boundaries, we must be a loving family as well as a hospital for sinners. We must also be a non-violent army. I will write about that in January's Beacon Article.

In Christ Jesus,
David L. Charlton, Pastor

Potluck Luncheon

Burton will be having a Soup and Salad potluck on Communion Sunday, **December 3, at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Center**, following the 10:00 am service. Please bring your favorite soup or salad to share. The church will supply delicious bread from around the world to go with it. If you do not cook, just bring yourselves. There is always more than enough food.



Status of Offerings

Please remember that the weekly offerings pay the expenses of our worship services, as well as contributing to the various church ministries. Below are the offerings and website collections for the past four services, along with the expenses for the same four weeks. The Year-to-Date totals show our expenses far exceed our offerings. The difference is being funded by our Child Development Center (CDC) income.

Last Four Weeks					Year to Date		
Week	Date	Offering	Expense	+ / -	Offering	Expense	+ / -
44	29-Oct	\$1,272	\$2,191	-919	\$83,433	\$229,666	-146,233
45	5-Nov	\$1,938	\$1,654	284	\$85,371	\$231,320	-145,949
46	12-Nov	\$2,127	\$2,144	-17	\$87,498	\$233,464	-145,966
47	19-Nov	\$993	\$966	27	\$88,491	\$234,430	-145,939

We are continuing with our Facebook Live services at 10:00 am, with videos posted on Facebook. If you are not able to attend services in person, please help us by either mailing your normal donation by check to Burton Memorial UMC, 93001 Overseas Highway, Tavernier, FL 33070, or go to our website: bmumc.net and click on **Give Online** in the upper right corner of the home page to set up a payment online.

Thank You to Plantation Key School

Once again, Plantation Key School parents, students and teachers organized a food drive for Burton's Food Pantry for Thanksgiving. This is a picture of just part of the donations. Just another indication of the wonderful community we live in!



God's Kitchen/Food Pantry

Burton is still in need of help with our Food Pantry Ministry. We can use extra hands in the pantry to help with deliveries on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, and to serve our clients. Please call or text Cindi Miller at 786-236-6336 to volunteer, or call the office at 305-852-2581, to get more details or to volunteer.

We are also still looking for groups or individuals to help with our God's Kitchen Free Dinner on Thursdays, helping to cook, serve and clean up. If you can help, please call or text Marylou Wilkinson at 305-394-3878, or call the office at 305-852-2581, to get more details or to volunteer.



Fit For Christ Exercise Group



The Fit For Christ weekly group, with support, education, and exercise for all ages, continues to *meet on Mondays from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm in Burton's Fellowship Center.* Exercise will help improve your balance, mobility and strength, and increase your spirits and your energy!

Tai Chi Open House Weekly Classes

Strength, Flexibility, and Stillness all in one exercise class? At Burton? Yes, twice a week!



We are blessed that **Tai Chi** is being offered here at Burton in the Fellowship Center on Tuesdays from 9:45 am to 11:15 am, and on Monday nights from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, for all levels of ability. All teachers are volunteers and class costs are by donations to cover the costs of the class location. You can start any time. The benefits are amazing and the history is fascinating. I hope you will check out their web site and the classes they have to offer. <https://www.taoisttaichi.org/>



Campus Ministry

If you would like yourself, your child, grandchild, or great grandchild to be put our "student database," please send your request to bae_bmumc@att.net, or call the church office at 305-852-2581. We will need the name of the child, grade, and school. Please also let us know if someone has graduated so we can honor them here.

Operation Christmas Child

Through your love and support we were able to send 94 shoebox gifts to hurting children around the world. They will be a part of the 12 million shoe box gifts that are being distributed. Thank you for your generosity and love for all God's Children! Please continue to pray for the millions of boys and girls who will be receiving gift-filled shoe boxes and gospel literature telling the story of God's love, and for the ministry partners as they distribute the shoe box gifts and share God's love with the children and their families. Your prayers are appreciated.





Hand Bell Concert

Our Burton Ringers will share their ringing gifts on Sunday, December 3, at 5:30 pm in the sanctuary. Scripture, music, and stories will accompany our handbell choir to bring you the songs of the sacred Advent and Christmas season. Refreshments will be served in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the concert. A love offering to fund our ministries will be taken. Please plan to attend and bring some friends!

Christmas Tea Fundraiser

The Altar Guild will host their *second annual Christmas Tea on Sunday, December 17, at 3:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.* Join us for an afternoon of Christmas cheer, friends, delicious food, and scrumptious tea. This year's theme is "White Christmas", and we will be watching the movie. Attendees are encouraged to wear their Christmas finery and bring a friend! Seating is limited – tickets are \$20 and will be on sale until December 16. All funds raised will go towards new banners and banner repairs. If you want to make something for our tea table, please contact Carol Albury Johnson, Sue Peacock or RaeLeigh Gonsalves. We cannot wait to share Christmas Tea with you!



Sunday Services on Christmas Eve

Burton Memorial will have its normal Sunday morning 10:00 am service on December 24.

There will also be a Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm. This service will be held in the sanctuary and will have many of your favorite Christmas songs. We will end with a special candlelight service.



On behalf of your Altar Guild – a big *thank you* to all the volunteers who came out to prepare the church and the decorations and install them! What a joy and blessing to be part of this great church! Mark your calendar for *Saturday, January 6, 2024, to be a part of our "undecorating" workday and luncheon, starting at 9:00 am.*

Altar Guild News

THE CHOSEN –Episodes

The Chosen is taking the month of December off. Please join us starting January 7, 2024, for season 3, on Sundays at 7:00 pm. Each Sunday two episodes will be shown in the Sanctuary at Burton Memorial UMC, 93001 Overseas Highway.



CDC Trunk or Treat

Our Child Development Center (CDC) had their parade and Trunk or Treat last month, along with a lovely Thanksgiving dinner for the parents and children. In December, a Santa Claus visit is planned for December 6, and Christmas dinner for the parents and children will be served on December 20.



United
Women
in Faith

As our year draws to a close, it was good to be able to connect with beloved member, Edna Waldorf, who recently relocated to a lovely new home in Homestead. Members decided to take Edna a picnic lunch on November 19 in lieu of our typical Monday evening meeting. Good food and a good time were had by all in attendance. Edna was presented a special UWF recognition pin for all her years of devoted service to the Burton unit. Since she is currently having some health issues, all members are asked to remember Edna in their prayers for strength, comfort, and healing.

The December meeting will be held on Monday, December 18, at 7:00 pm at the home of Mary Lou Wilkinson. Barbara Koch will be presenting an in-depth program on the Lord's Prayer. Everyone will need to bring a Bible for this study, hopefully a variety of versions to get the most benefit from the study. January and February meetings will feature a continuation of this study by Linda Lillo Norman and Betty Ann Gear.



Five new books were purchased for our 2024 Reading Program and may be found on the shelves in the church narthex. Members are encouraged to read one book from each of five categories (Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Social Action, Nurturing Community, and Spiritual Development) during the coming year. The category of each book is listed on the front inside cover of the book. All the books chosen by the United Women of Faith are designed to educate women about mission areas, social problems, and leadership skills, often through having us experience the world through the eyes of people with very different experiences than ours, increasing our sense of empathy and ability to work with diverse people to resolve problems.

Note: I know you tradition bound people are expecting to bring a Christmas ornament for a gift exchange at our December meeting. ***Not this year!*** We will see how many of you read your ***Beacon***. We will be exchanging gifts but not ornaments. Instead all you fabulous cooks (or shoppers) will bring a small tin or plate of delicious homemade Christmas goodies. Notice the word ***small***. This gift should be enough for one or two people, not the usual crowd you feed. Also, please wrap the gift so no one knows what it is to make the gift swap more fun.

Burton UWF wishes everyone a blessed Thanksgiving.

Peace, Love and Faith,

Mary Lou Wilkinson, President and Barbara Koch, Reading Program



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Over 100 hats and a few scarves were sent to a children's cancer hospital in Texas. All were prayed over at our altar. Prayer shawls and other items are made by our ministry.

Please join us every Thursday night at 7:00 pm in the Joy Classroom for fun and fellowship. We have supplies and we teach. For information call Virginia Spear 305-522-2978.

Christmas Gifts for Staff

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Dear Burton Congregation:

With the Advent Season upon us, we would like to present Pastor David and the staff of Burton Memorial (Esther Dieujuste, Sexton, Betsy Edwards, Administrative Assistant, Cindi Miller and Adele Budd, Food Pantry staff) with a monetary Christmas gift as an appreciation for all they do for us at Burton. If you would like to contribute, you may use the self-addressed envelope enclosed in the newsletter. You can put it in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mail in your gift to Burton Memorial UMC, 93001 Overseas Hwy, Tavernier, FL 33070. (Please make checks out to Burton Memorial UMC and put "Christmas Gift" in the memo line.)



Meaning of Advent

RaeLeigh Gonsalves

A blessed Advent and Merry Christmas! The Christmas holiday season is a very exciting time with our church dressed in her Christmas finery! We encourage you to join in the spirit of Advent with your whole heart. A little confused about Advent? Here are some basics about the traditions of Advent.

When. Advent marks the beginning of the church year. It begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day and ends on Christmas Eve. If Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, Advent will last four full weeks. If Christmas Day falls on any other day of the week, Advent will last less than four weeks. If Christmas falls on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, all of Advent will be in December. If Christmas falls on any other day of the week, Advent will begin in November.

What. Advent comes from the Latin word, *adventus*, meaning "coming." It is a season to prepare for the coming of Christ in various meanings: the promised coming of the Messiah to the Jews, the coming of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, the promised return of the risen Christ in final victory, and the continual coming of Christ into the lives and hearts of believers.

History. Advent began in France in the fourth century. In various times and locations of the church, Advent has been observed for three, four, and six weeks leading to Christmas.

Color. While the traditional color for Advent is purple, there is a growing interest in and acceptance of the color blue as an alternative. *The United Methodist Book of Worship* identifies purple or blue as appropriate colors for Advent. The genesis of the introduction of blue into the liturgical colors comes from continued reflection on the calendar of the Christian year, particularly on the season of Advent. Here is how the reasoning goes: Advent is a season of preparation that anticipates both Bethlehem and the consummation of history in the second coming of Jesus Christ. Since this anticipation is characterized by hope -- in contrast to the repentance characteristic of Lent -- the color for the season should not be purple, with its mood of solemnity and somberness, but blue with its hopefulness.

Here at Burton, we celebrate in many ways. We light the candles in our Advent wreath each Sunday, with the four candles representing "Hope", "Peace", "Love" and "Joy". The center white Christ candle will be lit this year on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We decorate our Chrismon tree with the symbols of the church. We encourage you and your family to take a close look at these symbols, many of which were handmade by members of our congregation. A picture explaining the meaning of these symbols is located on each of the front wall columns. See if you can find them all on the tree! We sing the hymns of Advent like "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" and "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" and the carols of Christmas such as "Away in the Manger" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem". We display our crèche with the scene of Nativity, complete with Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, animals, and eventually -- the baby Jesus! On Christmas Eve, we join in the singing of "Silent Night" with only candlelight to illuminate the church. Then we lift them together -- the Light of the World has come! This year, make Advent and Christmas a time of renewal as we await together the greatest Gift of all!

Homeless Recognition Day

Each year we gather at the gazebo in Settler's Park, Tavernier, to remember our neighbors who died while Homeless in 2023. This is a brief interfaith community memorial service filled with prayers, candles, blessings, and music. Please mark your calendar to be there this year. Let us join together reaching out to God in faith, embracing our neighbors with agape and celebrating life and community. *This year's Homeless Recognition Day will be held on Thursday, December 21, 2023, from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm.*

Food Pantry Donations

The food pantry at Burton Memorial is asking our church family and friends to take part in a unique way to celebrate Advent. It is called a "Reverse Advent Calendar". Starting December 1, 2023, we would like individuals and families to get a box and fill it with an item each day. On Sunday December 24 we would like the food donations to be brought to the church for our pantry to be given out to our clients. If you cannot make the Sunday service of December 24, you can drop the donations off anytime that week in the Fellowship Center.



EV's - Electric Vehicles

What can we as individuals do to slow down climate change? Not much, but buying an electric vehicle is one thing that does make a difference. Did you know...

FACT: The greenhouse gas emissions associated with an electric vehicle over its lifetime are typically lower than those from an average gasoline-powered vehicle, even when accounting for manufacturing.

FACT: Electric vehicles have charging strategies that can prevent overloading the grid, and, in some cases, support grid reliability.

FACT: Electric vehicles can be plugged into the same type of outlet as your toaster! When you need to charge while on the road, you'll find over 511,000 stations in the U.S. available to the public.

FACT: Electric vehicles typically have a smaller carbon footprint than gasoline cars, even when accounting for the electricity used for charging.

And the good news is that the cost of buying an EV is coming down! Used EV's are more and more on the market. Don't forget electric motorbikes and adult tricycles are also available.

Even if you are not ready to buy an EV, help us spread the word. The person most likely to buy an EV is one that has been introduced to Electric Vehicles and its advantages. You know, you can always ask our own Claude and Betty Bullock about their hybrid (gas and electric) vehicle.

Besides, I hear that they have charging stations in heaven!

Green Team



Church Council Retreat Report

David L. Charlton

Brothers and Sisters,

May God's grace give us the necessary joy, peace, and patience to love our neighbors.

On November 18, 2023, we had a wonderful, fun, and productive Church Council retreat! This article will explain the goals we developed for 2024. For a detailed report, refer to the email that I sent to the congregation on November 27, 2023. If you did not receive this email, please contact Betsy in the church office (305-852-2581) to ensure you are on the church email list. We developed a capital improvement goal and a program goal. We also scheduled some church events.



The Capital Improvement Goal

The capital improvement goal for 2024 is to build the restroom addition with a shower, laundry, and solar panels. The shower and laundry will be made available for use by members of the homeless community. The solar panels will help save money in the long-run and help the environment.

The Trustee Committee will take the lead in accomplishing this goal. Please support and encourage them with your time, talents, and gifts. They, in turn, will keep the congregation informed of our progress towards the accomplishment of this goal.

Achieving this goal will likely deplete our capital improvement fund. For financial security, we want to replenish it. So, in addition to your tithes, we ask that you contribute to the capital improvement fund.

The Program Goal

The program goal is to increase the interaction between the congregation and Child Development Center (CDC). We will do this by establishing an advisory board that will facilitate communication and cooperation between the congregation and CDC.

We believe this improved interaction will help revive our children's ministry. So, we will also take steps to revive our children's ministry program. We have already started to reinstitute Children's church. We are looking into the possibility of having a Sunday nursery worker from the CDC. We would also like to start Children Sunday School.

The other goals

During the retreat, we had a brainstorming session where we created a list of possible goals for 2024. Although we only picked two for 2024, we still want to make everyone aware of this list. Please look the list over and see if there is something you would like to work on. If there is something you would like to work on, let me know and get to it.

Here is the list:

- 1) Growth (Not a specific goal but a desired outcome)
- 2) Non-BMUMC volunteer growth (How to encourage more people to participate in and help with church activities)
- 3) Obtaining a church bus/van
- 4) Re-start youth ministry/conduct Gen z research
- 5) Hot/cold shelter
- 6) Establishing Sunday School for all ages
- 7) Add an evening worship service
- 8) Adult church socials
- 9) Strengthening the committees
- 10) Developing a better connection with the district and conference
- 11) Grow from pain, heal from pain (Not a specific goal but a desired outcome)

Major church events were put on the church calendar.

- 1) February 10, 2024: Rummage Sale
- 2) March 16 & 17: UWF Tea
- 3) March 23, 2024: Easter Egg Hunt (Donna Charlton will organize this)
- 4) October 19-31, 2024: Pumpkin Patch
- 5) October 26, 2024: Trunk Sale
- 6) ***We need a festival task force leader*** to organize BMUMC participation in community events such as Trunk or Treat at Founder's Park, Christmas Parade, 4th of July Parade – If interested, please let me know

A Meditation on John 1:1-18 - A Reminder of True Christmas

David L. Charlton

Scripture: John 1:1-2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.”

Meditation: Jesus is THE WORD. He was always with God because he is God – one of the persons of the Trinity. Jesus is in a perfectly loving relationship with THE FATHER and THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The type of love that binds together THE FATHER, THE HOLY SPIRIT and THE WORD is the same type of love we should strive to have for one another. God is love.

Just as our words reveal our innermost thoughts, desires and character, THE WORD reveals some of God’s innermost thoughts, desires and character. If you want to know God’s character, look at Jesus. You will find that God is a good & loving God.

Scripture: John 1:3-5: “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”

Meditation: THE WORD, along with THE FATHER and THE HOLY SPIRIT created all that is seen and unseen.

Scripture: John 1:6-9: “There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.”

Meditation: THE WORD is the light that shines in this sinful and broken world. This light provides hope & direction just as a lighthouse illuminates the way for lost sailors. This light beckons everyone into an eternal, loving relationship with God in God’s kingdom.

Scripture: John 1:10-13: “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.”

Meditation: Not everyone recognizes or follows THE WORD. Many prefer to remain in darkness and rule as if they are gods. But, to those who acknowledge and follow THE WORD, they become children of God.

Scripture: John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Meditation: THE WORD became flesh – a human named Jesus. He is like us in that he had to be born and mature like the rest of us. He is not like us in that he was conceived by THE HOLY SPIRIT and was perfectly obedient to THE FATHER. He had no sin.

This is what Christmas is about.

Coral Isles Church Blue Christmas



Blue? Yes, blue as in the blues. As in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Coral Isles Church is having a **Blue Christmas Service on December 21 at 6:00 pm at 90001 Overseas Hwy, Tavernier**. This worship service is designed to help those who are depressed during the holidays.